

Connecticut legislators,

2009 has been a perilous journey for many families in Connecticut. The financial crisis which started in 2008 has given it's biggest blow this year. By the looks of the trends 2010 will be even more difficult for families and as a result our children. There are moments which require unusual measures to stabilize the budget and the financial condition of our state. We understand that cuts must be made and sacrifices must be accepted. Since we understand that you, our legislators, do not have an easy task at hand we are here in person to assist your decision making process by providing a personal witness of the power of Parent Leadership, of The Commission on Children and of the investment the Parent Trust fund, via the Commission of Children is making in our communities.

The effects of this economic crisis will be felt by 35,000 Connecticut's children well after the economy has recovered. It is painful to see this happen for those who care the most about our children - we the parents. Even further there are some parents who do go the extra mile to become not just parents but Parent Leaders. Who care not only for the children who reside in the four walls and roof of their own house but the many four walls and roofs which house children of our communities. We did not become Parent leaders because our own initiative or our own personal revelation but rather because you the legislative body of Connecticut had the foresight to invest in our communities biggest asset - we the parents. You did this by creating the Commission on Children and funding it via the Parent Trust Fund. These two visionary vehicles have proven themselves worthy of surviving any economic crises that this state faces. Why? Because in a climate

where state revenues are dropping any program that generates revenue and saves money by creating an army of caring Parent Leader volunteers is one of the many contributing solutions to this economic crisis. Also, because The Commission on Children charts the path to be followed by Parent Leaders, like myself, on how to deal with poverty, education, racial issues, family issues and this recession in an effective manner. Something that a year ago I would have not considered possible.

The Commission on Children is not just strategically wise for Connecticut since it helps children through their most powerful advocates the parents but also tactically a sound revenue generating machine that must be allowed to help the state through this economic crisis be getting much needed Federal grant dollars. The Governor in an effort to meet the budgetary constraints and in what I believe to be an move out of ignorance, has zeroed out The Commission on Children and The Parent Trust fund, which by the way has private matching funds pending and will be lost if this is canceled. The cut proposed by the Governor's mitigation plan for these two programs does not make sense. Our children have enough burden with the economic crisis to now have this budgetary cut also be placed on their backs. How much more suffering must we impose on them? This is unacceptable to me as a parent leader and to the 100 other parent leaders in my community who I represent and to the thousands of parent leaders across the state of Connecticut.

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